Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5397th meeting

Monday, 27 March 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. D'Alotto/Mr. Taiana	(Argentina)
Members:	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Congo	Mr. Biabaroh-Iboro
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Ghana	Mr. Christian
	Greece	Mr. Psiachas
	Japan	Mr. Kawakami
	Peru	Mr. Ruiz Rosas
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Kuwari
	Russian Federation	Mr. Sitnikov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Brooker
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott Sanders

Agenda

The question concerning Haiti

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06-28596 (E)

The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As I indicated this morning, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is His Excellency Mr. Albert Ramdin, Deputy Secretary-General of the Organization of American States. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Ramdin: On behalf of the Organization of American States (OAS), I would like to thank the Security Council for this occasion to speak before it in this open debate on Haiti.

First of all, I would like to acknowledge the important participation of President-elect René Préval in this debate and to congratulate him on his electoral victory. We look forward to welcoming President-elect Préval and his delegation to Washington this coming Wednesday at a protocollary session of the OAS Permanent Council. I take this opportunity to underscore the strong commitment of the OAS to supporting the new Government and the people of Haiti and to helping President-elect Préval meet the numerous challenges ahead in building the requisite conducive governing and security environment.

The presidential and legislative elections held on 7 February were, first and foremost, a decisive victory for the Haitian people. The large turnout of the Haitian electorate and the enthusiasm and perseverance that it demonstrated on election day reconfirmed Haitians' solid commitment to the democratic process, which bodes well for the challenging months and years ahead as the Government strives to meet the people's demands and to temper expectations for a quick fix to the country's deep-rooted problems.

In the immediate term, it will be important to successfully conclude the legislative elections, whose second round is scheduled to take place on 21 April. It will be equally critical to maintain the time frame for the holding of municipal and local elections in Haiti, slated for 18 June. We would like to ask President-elect Préval to be particularly vigilant in ensuring that those elections take place on the scheduled date.

The OAS has noted with interest and appreciation the reaching out of the President-elect to various sectors in Haiti and a mutual reaching-out to him, which suggests an important basis for national consensus-building, national dialogue and reconciliation. We all know that elections tend to exacerbate existing differences and divergences among sectors in a country and that in Haiti, there has been a general atmosphere of polarization in the political sphere for many years. We would urge President-elect Préval to continue his outreach to multiple political and social sectors and to build an open, inclusive Government, which can provide a necessary base from which Haiti can recover socially, economically and in terms of overall stability.

We have also noted with appreciation the priority that Mr. Préval has accorded to his relations with the nations of our hemisphere, as several of his first visits as President-elect have been to countries of the Americas. That interest is mutual, and, in the context of the inter-American system, we look forward to working with the new Haitian Government in the community of nations of the hemisphere to tackle common challenges and difficulties in a collective and collaborative manner.

In addition to immediate actions to alleviate suffering and build hope, there is no substitute for long-term institution-building and investment in the Haitian infrastructure and economy in order to sow the seeds for a viable future. In terms of basic institutions, the expansion and professionalization of the Haitian police force are essential to provide public security and a security environment in which the economy can grow and spread its benefits. A strong, independent judiciary and a legal framework that will protect human rights and make everyone equal in the eyes of the law, as well as provide a framework for greater economic investment, will be critical. As we all know, much more work must be done in those areas.

In order to have a structure that will permit Haiti to grow and develop in a sustainable way, it will be imperative to begin building a stronger, more efficient and transparent State in Haiti. Effective entities that will hold the Government accountable to the people will be important, as well as public institutions that will be able to deliver basic services to the population. A strong State will also be able to tackle problems and threats generated internally or externally — such as drug trafficking and other manifestations of organized

crime — that will otherwise seriously compromise Haiti's future.

The environmental challenges in Haiti are clearly enormous, and no discussion about Haiti's future can ignore that stark reality. Reforestation, soil depletion, water conservation and sanitation are some of the critical issues to be tackled.

The OAS is poised to harness its expertise and resources internally, and also to continue to coordinate and mobilize the resources and efforts of other institutions of the inter-American system, to contribute to long-term institution-building and social and economic reconstruction in Haiti. We have already held several meetings among inter-American institutions, on the basis of the needs expressed by the incoming Government, in order to undertake action in support of the Government's future efforts as well as the efforts of local non-governmental agencies and other entities.

The OAS will continue to support the Haitian registry and identification system as a crucial basis for social and economic development and for future electoral processes and will continue to help build a solid, professional and permanent electoral institution on the basis of our recent work in Haiti and the expertise we have developed throughout the hemisphere over the past 15 years. We are also set to support the strengthening of the Haitian human rights system and judiciary and to strengthen the emerging Haitian political party system, among other areas.

In closing, I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés, for their efforts and for their close and effective collaboration with the OAS Special Mission in Haiti over the past years.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme.

Ms. Grynspan: On behalf of Kemal Derviş, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Chairman of the United Nations Development Group, I want to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Security Council on the work of the United Nations Country Team in support of recovery, reconciliation and development in Haiti.

The successful presidential election of 7 February presents Haiti with an historic opportunity to break the cycle of crisis and underdevelopment that has afflicted the country for so long. Nevertheless, we also know how fragile such transition periods can be. In such transitions, humanitarian and development actions are crucial contributions to political and security achievements. I believe that Haitians can agree on sustained humanitarian and development strategies, coupled with vigorous efforts in the immediate post-electoral period. To implement that approach, the continued commitment of the international community is critical.

A framework to guarantee and sustain effective support for Haiti must build upon the accomplishments and lessons of the Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF), which has guided international cooperation in Haiti since 2004. Under the Framework, $780 million has already been disbursed — $80 million of it through the United Nations. Some achievements are notable and have been documented. For example, with regard to HIV/AIDS, the rate of transmission has fallen. There has also been progress in controlling disease and malnutrition. But the challenges remain substantial.

The latest meeting of the Haiti donor contact group, last February, confirmed the proposal to extend the ICF until December 2007, in order to provide a continuous cooperation framework for the new Government. Importantly, the group also decided that it would work with the newly elected authorities to take stock of the ICF's performance to date and to conduct an independent evaluation.

I would like to stress our commitment to work together with the elected Government on those review processes, which will guide the extension of the ICF that is to be proposed at a pledging conference in September 2006, at the latest. The donor conference will muster support for Haiti during the critical transition period. Maintaining funding levels for the ICF's extension will be decisive for Haiti's development.

Today, over 76 per cent of Haitians live on less than $2 a day, and 56 per cent live on less than $1 a day. Long-term commitment by the international community therefore entails rapidly launching an inclusive and nationally owned process to develop a

strategy against poverty based on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. That strategy would then serve as Haiti's cooperation framework from 2008 onwards. The Country Team is committed to supporting that endeavour. In that context, it will also be a priority to identify and enact, together with donors, innovative solutions to tackle the complex problem of capacity building, particularly that of State institutions.

Yet, achieving success against poverty and attaining the Millennium Development Goals also require sustainable and equitable economic growth. For that reason, the Country Team has agreed to support President-elect Préval's proposal to organize a forum on international private investment in Haiti.

Given the particular risks associated with transitions from crisis, the Country Team and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) have developed a post-electoral stabilization strategy within the structure of the ICF. That four-pronged strategy is focused on critical and catalytic areas for a successful transition. The first component will develop a coherent and streamlined package of high-impact and high-visibility programmes, including rapid employment. The second will support key democratic institutions, specifically the Parliament, as well as the creation of a permanent electoral council and the strengthening of local governments. The strategy also includes a continued effort to promote political dialogue and social cohesion, and the necessary inputs to launch the preparation of a long-term poverty-reduction strategy. The Country Team will play a fundamental role in each of those components.

The magnitude of post-electoral needs, especially with regard to the first two components, calls for the immediate implementation of the post-electoral stabilization strategy. The Country Team is now engaging donor countries for support.

As the security situation improves, the country team has accelerated the delivery of humanitarian assistance. For example, UNICEF and the Pan-American Health Organization recently conducted a successful vaccination campaign in Cité Soleil, the World Food Programme has fed 1 million Haitians and the United Nations Population Fund is leading programmes to fight AIDS and gender-based violence. Furthermore, preparing for the upcoming hurricane season requires immediate attention and planning. Haiti can count on the full willingness of the Country Team to respond to humanitarian requirements, especially as regards the basic needs of women, children, young people and disabled and elderly persons.

With regard to its humanitarian response, the Country Team continues to be committed to supporting development solutions, including an island-wide approach with the neighbouring Dominican Republic. I believe that the situation in Haiti demonstrates how development and humanitarian work can contribute to security and embolden political gains. During the continuing transition, those synergies will be more important than ever — for example, by assuring that the Country Team and MINUSTAH work strategically and integrally in the areas of police reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and the reform of the justice system, on basis of the work achieved as part of the integrated mission.

Haiti and the international community face an historic opportunity to set the country on the path of reconciliation and sustained development. For the sake of Haitians, we must seize the occasion with determination.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Austria, on whom I now call.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I have the honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the countries aligning themselves with this statement.

Haiti has made significant progress in laying the foundation for an inclusive democratic transition, at a pace that seemed unlikely a year ago. The support of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has been crucial. The European Union expresses its satisfaction that the presidential and the first-round parliamentary elections of 7 February took place peacefully. They mark an important step forward in the democratic process. We welcome the high turnout by, and serious engagement of, the people of Haiti in exercising their democratic right to choose their future leaders despite the major technical and logistical problems encountered during the organization of the vote.

We would like to seize the opportunity presented by the presence of President-elect René Préval of Haiti to congratulate him on his new mandate and to reaffirm the European Union's commitment to the people and authorities of Haiti in their efforts to rebuild and develop their country.

By providing €18 million to the electoral process and by sending an EU electoral observation mission to Haiti, the EU has demonstrated its strong commitment to the transition process in Haiti.

The EU notes that the second round of parliamentary elections will be held on 21 April, and that the swearing-in ceremony of the President-elect will take place at the inaugural session of the newly elected Parliament. We hope that the parliamentary elections will be conducted in a peaceful and credible manner, so that they enhance the democratic process, the rule of law and the establishment of strong and stable institutions.

The security situation remains a cause of concern. The European Union therefore calls upon Haiti's leaders to demonstrate strong commitment to improving the security of their citizens in partnership with MINUSTAH. Much-needed progress in the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes will also contribute to that.

Underlying socio-economic conditions need to be addressed as well. Quick-impact projects are a valuable tool in that regard.

Moreover, the reform of the Haitian national police must be reinforced by addressing shortcomings in the judicial system. Current and future national authorities must find a swift solution to the problem of the high number of prolonged pretrial detentions, which are unacceptable from a human rights perspective and, if continued, will have serious implications for the country's security and stability. As Haiti begins a new chapter in its history, it is vital that the incoming leadership give special attention to reconciliation and an inclusive approach.

The announced normalization of relations between Haiti and the Caribbean community is a positive signal. Moreover, Haiti's political and institutional progress will require a sustained commitment from the Haitian authorities to good governance, including in the economic and social sectors, the promotion of key democratic values, respect for the independence of the judiciary and an impartial professional civil service and police, as well as full commitment to human rights.

In order to achieve those goals, the international community will need to continue to assist Haiti and to work closely with the local authorities. Ultimately, however, the future of the country lies in the hands of the Haitians themselves.

In conclusion, the European Union would like to commend the crucial role of MINUSTAH in support of the democratic transition process in Haiti and to thank Juan Gabriel Valdés for his leadership.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of El Salvador, to whom I give the floor.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to express the appreciation of the Government of El Salvador for the initiative to convene this meeting of the Security Council to review the situation in Haiti.

The delegation of El Salvador welcomes the significant presence here today of the President-elect, Mr. René Garcia Préval, and would like to join in the congratulations that have been expressed here upon his election on 7 February.

My country supports the efforts made by the Haitian people to maintain the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of their nation. Likewise, we are encouraged by the successful holding of the elections, which were marked by a massive turnout by the Haitian people to democratically elect their authorities.

Special mention should be made of the role played by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which we firmly support. We also welcome the steps taken towards self-governance in Haiti. Our own experience allows us to affirm the importance of civic participation in the strengthening of democratic institutions. We are encouraged to see the Haitian people expressing a renewed commitment to fighting against violence, sharing, in a spirit of hope, a national vision that will lead to the sustainable development of their country.

The international community must also continue to provide consistent and comprehensive support for the economic and social stabilization process in Haiti.

My country, for its part, reaffirms its commitment to the people and the Government of Haiti. Thus, if requested, we will share our experiences in the area of the strengthening of democratic institutions and social cohesion, where we have met with some success in recent years.

The history of El Salvador, with its transition from conflict to peacebuilding, has certainly provided us with valuable lessons in the use of dialogue and negotiation in settling our differences. In order to counter violence resulting from the evolution of the transitional process itself, a commitment on the part of all citizens is required so as to lay the foundation for good governance.

In that context, El Salvador would like to welcome the importance accorded to the role of Haitian women as a critical factor in the context of change, governance and long-term development in the country. We urge the new authorities to strengthen that approach, which could be decisive for the success of policies and programmes aimed at eliminating extreme poverty and contributing to long-term national development.

In that context, we are encouraged by the steps taken towards coordination between MINUSTAH and the Haitian national police. In particular, we welcome the interest shown in ensuring the participation of a larger number of women in tasks related to peace and security, such as indicated in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). We reaffirm our willingness to continue participating in Haiti with a larger number of police officers, especially women, so that they may contribute, from a gender perspective, to building confidence in the institution, to enhancing the effectiveness of police stations, and to providing technical and logistical training to the Haitian national police.

We are committed also to making the necessary efforts to strengthen cooperation in our Central American region in terms of providing training and guidance to the police through special programmes. Relations between citizens and police must be based upon trust and efficiency.

It is also necessary to undertake comprehensive reforms in the area of security, which, among other things, will promote the professionalization of the national police, the modernization of the judicial and electoral systems, and the educational process in the area of respect for human rights. Here, El Salvador would like to welcome the coordination of actions between MINUSTAH and UNICEF aimed at promoting, among political parties and civil society representatives, the issue of the protection of children. Our country believes that that critical area requires attention and prevention on the part of the national authorities as well as the international community, since that vulnerable group is capable of emulating, on certain occasions, acts of violence patterned on the illegal activities of juvenile gangs.

In conclusion, we reiterate the political will of the Government of El Salvador to support the people and the Government of Haiti in their efforts towards stabilization, peacebuilding and development, through support for MINUSTAH as well as through hemispheric and subregional initiatives, in particular within the framework of the Central American Integration System and the Organization of American States.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Spain, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first to congratulate the Argentine presidency for having convened, in a timely manner, this open meeting of the Security Council to address the situation in, and prospects for, Haiti. I am pleased in particular to see among us the President-elect of Haiti, Mr. René Garcia Préval, to whom I reiterate the congratulations of the Government of Spain upon his recent election. In addition, the high level of representation in today's debate is a sign of the international community's great interest in the progress and future of Haiti.

We are also grateful for the information provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés, whose work as Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) merits all of our appreciation and support. Spain fully endorses the statement made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. We would also like to add a few comments in our national capacity.

The upcoming weeks and months will be crucial for the future of Haiti. Through their large turnout for the elections, the Haitian people have shown their commitment to the democratization of their country, an

element that is fundamental to peacebuilding and to the sustainable development of the country.

Spain has provided technical and financial assistance to MINUSTAH and to the Organization of American States. We have also taken part in the European Union electoral observer mission. The democratic process that is beginning now must be inclusive, and the new institutions must represent the whole of Haitian society and must promote dialogue and national reconciliation.

Spain is firmly committed to maintaining and strengthening its long-term commitment to stabilization and reconstruction in Haiti. Although current limitations on the deployment of Spanish troops abroad — as decided by our Parliament — have prevented us from further extending the presence of the Spanish military contingent in MINUSTAH, Spain would like to contribute towards the strengthening of the work of the United Nations in Haiti, in line with the aspiration expressed by the Ibero-American community at the summits held at San José, Costa Rica and Salamanca, Spain, to play an active role in the stabilization and reconstruction of Haiti.

In this connection, the Spanish Government is actively studying with the United Nations Secretariat a way to enhance our support to MINUSTAH's police contingent, since this component of the Mission is going to become even more important in the period that is now beginning. We are also studying the possibility of implementing a programme of bursaries and training courses in Spain for members of the Haitian security forces in order to help to improve their level of training within the context of the necessary reform and strengthening of the Haitian national police, as requested by the Security Council in resolution 1608 (2005).

I would like to point out that Haiti has become a priority country for Spanish cooperation. Not in vain, we have tripled the amount of our contribution commitments to reconstruction in the country, compared to what was initially announced within the framework of the 2004 Washington donor conference. Spanish cooperation in Haiti now covers such relevant areas as food security, access to drinking water, the health sector and budgetary support. Moreover, Spain is planning to cooperate with the new Haitian authorities in areas such as strengthening the rule of law and democratic institutions, as well as reform in training.

As an expression of our desire to continue participating in the reconstruction process, in international efforts aimed at the process of political and economic reconstruction of the country and in defending and promoting good economic and social governance, Spain is ready to host an upcoming donor conference on Haiti.

A new phase is beginning in Haiti, where we are sure that the new Government, the other political forces and the entire Haitian population will be able to face the future, as it appears today, with the full support of the international community and, of course, of Spain.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rock (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this open debate on Haiti. We hail it as an indication that Haiti is on the international community's priority agenda, and it must remain there.

I wish also to note the presence of President-elect René Préval among us and to congratulate him on his election victory. We wish him the best of luck in carrying out the important mandate that the Haitian people have confided to him. Allow me also to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés, for his admirable work in Haiti in recent years. His ongoing dialogue with all Haitian politicians and his efforts to mobilize the international community have contributed enormously to laying the foundation for a constructive relationship between Haiti and the international community.

Mr. President, the fact that you have initiated this debate on behalf of Argentina reminds us that there is a regional aspect to and regional solidarity with Haiti. This is imperative to the success of international efforts in Haiti. Therefore, we must ensure that there is full partnership with the Organization of American States and the Caribbean Community in the international community's involvement in Haiti.

This Council meeting is being held at a time when there are still several crucial steps on the horizon for Haiti. These include the second ballot of the parliamentary elections, the accession to office of the new President and his Government, and local and

municipal elections. The renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) next August is yet another important step, this time in terms of what form the United Nations presence in Haiti will take after the elections. Various development initiatives coordinated by the Interim Cooperation Framework and developed in the medium term as part of a national poverty reduction strategy will also be implemented so as to mitigate the leading causes of insecurity and instability in Haiti.

Completing these steps will solidify the success of the political transition and lay the foundations for sustainable development in Haiti. Consequently, Canada will help in the preparations for each of these steps and ensure they are successful.

For the moment, let us turn our attention to the short-term challenges upon which both Haiti and the international community agree. First, it is vital that the second round of elections be held on the scheduled date — 21 April 2006 — so the new Government can take office. It is also of utmost importance that local and municipal elections then be held quickly. Furthermore, comprehensive reform of the Haitian national police must be undertaken, as mentioned in Security Council resolution 1608 (2005). To ensure success, all parties involved must have a common strategic vision and a political will to move forward on policing and to properly begin the even more complex work of reforming the legal system.

These reforms and the re-establishment of the rule of law in general are in line with a vision of sustainable development. They are also vital if some major human rights problems in Haiti are to be resolved. We must also stress the importance of including a gender-equality component once these reforms are developed and implemented.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada wants to congratulate all those who have demonstrated the flexibility and the commitment that will be required to fulfil the various responsibilities to be faced, given the enormous, indeed the colossal, challenges brought on by the instability that has prevailed in Haiti over the past few years. Future success will depend on MINUSTAH and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations continuing to reconcile the legitimacy of their presence and a United Nations Charter mandate with tighter coordination with all of the donors through the Interim Cooperation Framework mechanism and its sectoral issue tables. This will ensure the partnership of the Haitian authorities, optimize the various areas of expertise and consolidate international action. Future work in the fundamental and sensitive sectors of justice and security will also require that we be more sensitive to local realities.

Canada hopes that the spirit of cooperation between the people of Haiti and the international community will increase in the coming months and years. The reforms ahead are going to take a lot of work. Canada commits today that it will continue to cooperate with Haiti as an equal partner by fully respecting its Constitution, its culture and its diversity. We stress the need to work with a united Haitian people, moving towards true national reconciliation, and with national authorities who are politically inclusive and committed to working democratically towards political, economic and social development. The recent successes are encouraging for the future. Delays in other areas show the distance we have yet to travel. We must move ahead in partnership with the Haitian people, and that is why, despite the extent of the challenge Canada remains clear-sighted yet confident and determined to contribute to Haiti's development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of South Africa, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Mr. President, we thank you for allowing us to participate in today's open meeting and share our views on the question of Haiti. We welcome the presence today of the newly elected President of Haiti, Mr. René Préval. We extend our warmest congratulations to President-elect Préval and all the Haitian people who participated in the elections. South Africa believes that the successful outcome of the February elections in Haiti has given the country yet another opportunity to tackle the long-term political and developmental challenges it faces.

The people of Haiti have suffered for far too long. The levels of poverty and underdevelopment in that country are the highest in the western hemisphere. We believe that the successful democratic election now requires that the Haitian people, in partnership with the international community, focus on the economic development of Haiti to help set that nation on the path to sustainable, long-term development. There can be no

security without development, and human rights are difficult to promote and uphold in a situation where there is no political stability. It is therefore incumbent upon the United Nations and its agencies, together with the Bretton Woods institutions, to work together with the people of Haiti to achieve sustainable development and strengthen democracy and to promote political change and national reconciliation.

We believe that the new leadership of Haiti is ready to seize the opportunity to work with all segments of Haitian society in building national unity, reconciliation, justice and peace. No one among us would wish for a recurrence of the political instability that Haiti experienced two years ago. For that reason, we remain convinced that a long-lasting political future for Haiti depends on the comprehensive resolution of its internal political dynamic. We believe that the time has come for all political parties in Haiti, including the Lavalas party and its leadership, to join together to create political stability in Haiti. The international community must make a long-term commitment to assisting all the Haitian parties to achieve a long-lasting political solution in Haiti.

In conclusion, we wish to commend the efforts made by the United Nations, in particular by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés, in helping to create a climate that is conducive to the people of Haiti exercising their democratic rights, despite the difficult challenges and obstacles they face.

South Africa, working through the African Union and in partnership with CARICOM, is ready to join the international community to assist the people of Haiti in their efforts to build a peaceful, stable, just and prosperous State. We are convinced that Haiti can succeed only to the extent to which the international community can provide political support and the much-needed resources for development. That, we believe, is the least that the Haitian people would expect from us.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Cuba, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Malmierca Diaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, I would like to welcome the participation in this debate of the President-elect of the brotherly Republic of Haiti, Mr. René Préval. On behalf of the Cuban people and Government, I reiterate to Mr. Préval our message of congratulations and friendship for the important and historic victory he achieved in the recent elections.

The Cuban delegation also wishes to express its satisfaction at seeing you, Minister Taiana, presiding over the meeting. Your attitude of respect towards Latin America and your tireless efforts to promote Argentina's legitimate interests are held in very high regard by our country. I take this opportunity also to commend the Argentine delegation for the outstanding manner in which it has presided over the Security Council's work during the month of March.

Haiti, cradle of the liberation struggles against colonialism in the Americas and the first independent black republic in Latin America and the Caribbean, is today a country ignored by the international community. That Caribbean country is suffering greatly from poverty and structural underdevelopment. It is one of the most telling examples of the terrible consequences of colonialism and neocolonialism, the current unjust and exclusive international order, and the continued interventionism that has characterized its turbulent republican history.

When the situation of Haiti is addressed in the United Nations, the focus is almost exclusively on security issues, and, despite the urgent attention that is required to address the serious structural, economic and social problems that plague the country, the later are, for all practical purposes, ignored or minimized. Peace and security in that nation require, first of all, the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment. There cannot be peace without development nor development without peace.

With renewed hope, the international community must take advantage of the success of the elections held on 7 February last in Haiti. Foreign interests from well-known countries conspired to make the process collapse. But the Haitian people took to the streets and thwarted the plot — clear evidence that they are ready to demand, by any means, that their legitimate right to self-determination be respected.

Cuba, which supports and will always support the right of peoples to self-determination, wishes to highlight the determination of the noble people of Haiti to defuse current tensions and to undertake a process of national dialogue and reconciliation. Likewise, my delegation wishes to underscore the support and efforts of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the

Association of Caribbean States to achieve sustainable peace and development in Haiti.

However, much remains to be done before stability and progress can be achieved in the sisterly Republic of Haiti. That will be possible only if its economic and social development are promoted, its human resources trained and its infrastructure built. The international community and the international institutions are in duty bound to contribute massively, increase their assistance and fulfil their financial and human commitments to that Caribbean country so as to achieve economic and social rehabilitation and national reconciliation in Haiti.

My country takes this opportunity to welcome the recently announced initiative by the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Hugo Chávez Frías, to incorporate Haiti in the Petrocaribe Programme, through which that Caribbean nation will be able to purchase crude oil and refined products under preferential financial terms. That decision is a clear example of solidarity that should be imitated by others.

The need to show true solidarity becomes even more evident if we analyse some of the statistics of that brotherly Caribbean country. More than 80 per cent of the more than 8 million Haitians live in poverty, two-thirds are unemployed, life expectancy is under 52 years, and 48 out of every 100 inhabitants are illiterate. In Haiti there are only 2.5 doctors for every 100,000 inhabitants. The number of HIV/AIDS cases is the largest of all Caribbean States. Death during childbirth is the second leading cause of death among women, and almost half of the population suffers from malnutrition.

Cuba, a small country which has been subjected for over 45 years to the most brutal and merciless economic, financial and commercial blockade ever imposed on any nation, has maintained and enhanced its cooperation with that fraternal Caribbean country, providing the Haitian people with doctors, teachers, technicians and development assistance.

My country cooperates with Haiti in different sectors, primarily in the area of health care. During more than six years of coope ation in the medical field, 2,246 Cuban health-care specialists have worked in Haiti. Their work has made it possible to hold more than 8 million consultations. They have given 865,202 doses of vaccine, and they have assisted in more than 70,000 births and performed 109,000 surgical operations. All told, these actions have saved more than 180,000 lives.

In spite of the critical situation that this country has experienced, Cubans providing assistance strictly observe the criteria of non-interference in Haitian internal domestic affairs and have remained in their posts. Our medical brigade in particular, made up of 399 health practitioners, spread out among the 10 departments of that country, has been an example of selfless cooperation, saving lives under the harshest of conditions. Recently, 514 Haitians have undergone surgery in Cuba within the framework of Operación Milagro, enabling them to regain their eyesight.

Cuban cooperation with Haiti goes beyond direct medical care for the population. It includes the continued training of human resources, allowing for short- and medium-term capacity-building. Currently, there are 900 Haitian students in Cuba, 613 of whom are attending the Latin-American School of Medicine. This year, 121 medical students are expected to graduate.

We are not trying to give lessons or to boast about what we have done. What Cuba is doing today for Haiti is but a modest example of how much more could be achieved in that country through cooperation and international assistance, mainly by those States that have more economic and financial resources than our small country does.

We are convinced that much more could be done for Haiti within the United Nations as well. We hope that the presence at this meeting of representatives of several specialized agencies will contribute to the devising of coordinated, long-term strategies that are commensurate with the real needs of the Haitian people.

I would like to conclude by reiterating that Haiti can always count on our unwavering determination to continue strengthening the spirit of solidarity of, and increasing the assistance provided by, the Cuban people and Government. In so doing, we are simply fulfilling a duty and honouring our debt of gratitude to the Caribbean peoples, and particularly to the Haitian people, who have always made clear their steadfast friendship and solidarity with my country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker is the representative of Mexico, to whom I give the floor.

Ms. Anguiano Rodríguez (Mexico)(*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me first of all, to thank you for having convened this meeting, which is taking place at a time of great opportunity for Haiti. For the delegation of Mexico, it is an honour to have here with us President-elect René Préval, whom we warmly welcome. We would also like to thank Ambassador Valdés for his presence and for the work that he has done.

Mexico fully endorses the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana on behalf of the Rio Group and, as a result, we will simply add a few comments in our national capacity.

The latest elections on 7 February showed the commitment of the people and the Government of Haiti to democracy, as well as their willingness to move forward along the path towards a solid and lasting peace. I would like to acknowledge in particular the Interim President, Mr. Latortue, who played a key role in this transitional period, especially after the elections. I would like also to take advantage of this opportunity to congratulate President-elect Préval and to reiterate the willingness of the Government of Mexico to support the new Government and to continue cooperating with it.

It is crucial that the upcoming second round of legislative elections, as well as the municipal and local elections, take place in a climate of peace, democracy and transparency, the necessary conditions to foster civic trust. Elections are part of a long and complex process of consolidating democratic institutions. We hope that in the post-electoral period all the political forces in Haiti, as well as civil society, will maintain a constructive dialogue for the sake of national reconciliation. Women's organizations, which are strong in Haiti, can also play a very constructive role in this process.

As previous speakers have said, democracy and peace cannot be consolidated in Haiti if they do not go hand in hand with policies that truly promote social justice and economic development in the short, medium and long term. Although the definition and implementation of such policies is primarily a national responsibility, it is clear that Haiti will require the sustained support of the international community over the long term in order to overcome the challenges that it now faces.

We trust that the recently created Peacebuilding Commission, as well as other mechanisms such as the Interim Cooperation Framework, will be used to focus the attention of the international community on the situation in Haiti and maintain it for as long as necessary.

Through the Federal Electoral Institute, Mexico provided technical assistance during the preparatory stage of the elections and is prepared to continue cooperating with Haiti in the area of consolidating electoral and democratic institutions. Likewise, my country is currently coordinating other cooperation projects, and we are considering expanding our activities in that area.

In multilateral and regional forums, Mexico will continue to call for Haiti to receive the attention and support of the international community which it requires and which will be very useful to it. We believe that it is crucial for the United Nations to maintain its presence in Haiti through the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and we believe that the Organization of American States has an important role to play in the post-electoral period. Likewise, we welcome the recent decision of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community with respect to Haiti's reintegration in the Community's Councils.

Lastly, I would like to express our particular gratitude to Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his commitment to Haiti, as well as the civilian, military and police personnel that make up MINUSTAH, for the work that they have been doing.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mrs. Núñez de Odremán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)(*spoke in Spanish*): First, we would like to congratulate the Argentine Republic for the work it has been doing in the presidency of the Security Council in the month of March. We also welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. René García Préval in this Council meeting. We thank you, Sir, for giving us this opportunity to take part in the consideration of the situation in Haiti.

We would like to take advantage of this opportunity to reiterate, on behalf of the Government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, our desire that the will of the Haitian people, expressed through recent elections that led to the victory of President René García Préval, will be fully respected so that within the limits imposed by legality and legitimacy, the Government and people of Haiti will be allowed to build, consolidate and perpetuate a democratic system that guarantees inclusion and the participation of society in government management, the ultimate objective of which should be to ensure the general well-being of the country. And for this it will be necessary, among other things, to have the unconditional synergistic and constructive aid, cooperation and assistance of the other members of the international community.

In this context, the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez Frías, made public on 19 February the readiness expressed to Mr. Préval, President-elect of Haiti, for Haiti to be included in the mechanisms and processes for energy cooperation that are carried out by the Venezuelan Government within the framework of PetroCaribe. The PetroCaribe agreement was signed by Venezuela in June 2005 with 13 Caribbean nations. Other countries were added to this number later. This agreement will make it possible for Haiti to finance 50 per cent of its oil purchases for 25 years, with a grace period of up to two years.

Likewise, we reiterate that our country will continue to offer steadfast cooperation with the people of Haiti within the framework of bilateral relations, and we welcome the decision of the Caribbean Community to readmit Haiti, as well as to provide the technical and material support that it requires.

The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Organization of American States has raised within that regional body the possibility of reactivating the Group of Friends of Haiti, urging countries of the American continent to support Haiti's economic recovery process and, in this respect, referred to the need to channel the financial support that is now being held up in multilateral banks.

We hope that soon we will see the high-level bilateral exchanges in order to strengthen further the close, cordial and fraternal ties that have always marked the relationship between the Haitian and Venezuelan peoples.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council.

"The Security Council commends the Haitian people on the successful completion of the first round of their electoral process, congratulates Mr. René García Préval on his election as President, and looks forward to working with the new Government to help build a better future for Haiti. This process will give Haiti a unique opportunity to break with the violence and political instability of the past. The Council expresses its full support for the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Juan Gabriel Valdés,

"The Security Council welcomes the announcement by the Haitian authorities to hold the second round of parliamentary elections on 21 April 2006, which will allow the prompt inauguration of the President-elect. The Council emphasizes that timely municipal and local elections are also fundamentally important to complete Haiti's electoral process and to strengthen its democratic institutions. The Council urges the Transitional Government of Haiti and the Provisional Electoral Council, with the support of the international community, to continue to ensure that the electoral process is conducted in a transparent and credible manner. The Council reiterates its call on all parties to respect the outcome of the elections, remain engaged in the political process, and promote national reconciliation and inclusiveness in order to reach consensus on the basic policies Haiti should pursue to bolster its democratic transition.

"The Security Council stresses the need to ensure a secure and stable environment in Haiti and expresses its support for MINUSTAH's continued efforts to assist the Haitian authorities in that respect. The Council, in that regard, encourages all troop- and police-contributing countries to remain engaged in MINUSTAH. The

Council reaffirms that the establishment of the rule of law, including the protection of human rights, institutional capacity-building, and rapid progress on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration will be crucial to Haiti's future over the next few years. To this end, the sustained political will and the common strategic vision of the Haitian authorities and the international community are essential. In this context, the Council underlines the urgent need to proceed with a thorough and comprehensive reform of the Haitian national police in line with its resolution 1608 (2005), as well as concurrent justice reform.

"The Security Council is aware that sustainable development in Haiti remains essential to the stability of the country. In that regard, the Council reiterates the need for the quick implementation of highly visible and labour-intensive projects that help to create jobs and deliver basic social services. Recognizing progress already made in donor efforts, the Council calls on donors and relevant stakeholders to work with the new Government through the Interim Cooperation Framework to reassess assistance priorities in a targeted way and to work in close coordination, as appropriate, with MINUSTAH. The Council reiterates its willingness to cooperate with the newly elected authorities in order to address the long-term challenges facing Haiti."

That statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2006/13.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.